

Mr. Katushev, Mr. Kanayev, Mr. Nodwell, members of the Canada-U.S.S.R. Business Council, ladies and gentlemen -- I wish to first say how delighted I was to be invited by a council composed of so many distinguished business representatives from both countries assembled here today.

Almost two years ago, the dream of a binational trade council was first broached by Mr. Albert Reichmann, one of Canada's leading entrepreneurs, and other interested industrialists in our country. Last November, the council was officially formed in partnership with the U.S.S.R. Chamber of commerce and industry during the visit of Prime Minister Mulroney to your country. This week I am leading a delegation of 30 senior business executives from across Canada, together with three other members of Parliament and federal and provincial officials.

We are determined to strengthen the momentum towards economic co-operation which was launched this time last year when Deputy Prime Minister Mazankowski toured the Soviet Union and which was further increased by our Prime Minister in November. In this regard, I have had the pleasure of meeting Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Katushev and the Soviet Minister of Fisheries Mr. Kotlyar during their visits to Canada earlier this year. Later today, Mr. Katushev and I will be signing the Annual Protocol on Economic Co-operation at the conclusion of our regular mixed Economic Commission consultations. I will then officiate at the formal opening of the CUBC's Moscow office. Throughout this week I am meeting Ministers and touring facilities, listening and learning, and seeking out opportunities to expand bilateral trade and investment.

In a nutshell, we are spreading the word that "Canada is ready now more than ever for business with the U.S.S.R." The Canadian private sector is joining hands with government in response to the Soviet Union's move towards a regulated market economy. We support economic reform and modernization as the Soviet Union aims to become more of a global business player along with Canada and other nations. This morning's seminar topic -- "Know Canada" -- is only the latest in a series of initiatives that reflect Canada's commitment to supporting efforts to build a free market economy.

This morning you have sought, through an exchange of views, to narrow the information gap on leading Canadian technologies, ways of doing business, the role of government in the economy, and other features which make Canada such an attractive trading partner. I welcome this occasion to (1) encourage the continued liberalization of foreign trade and investment in the